Strong Leadership

... a clear course

✔ Two Years Later

NOVA SCOTIA

Introduction

Since being sworn in on August 16, 1999, Premier John Hamm and the Nova Scotia government have taken an aggressive approach in implementing *Strong Leadership ... a clear course*, the plan presented to Nova Scotians in the summer of 1999.

The following is a review of the commitments and actions since the new government assumed office and started following a clear course to build a better province for Nova Scotians. While this is an extensive outline of the commitments kept by John Hamm and the government, action to complete many others is also under way.

Premier Hamm's Government is the first government in Nova Scotia to provide regular and comprehensive up-dates of its progress in meeting its commitments to the people of Nova Scotia.

The government will continue to provide Nova Scotians with a status report on its four-year plan throughout its mandate.

Building a Healthier Province

"Building a responsive, outcome-based, and efficient health care system is the most urgent priority."

Commitment
Assume the existing debt of the non-designated hospitals and the regional health boards. (p. 8)

Action
- ✔ Assumed operating deficits and debts in October 1999 budget.

Commitment
Eliminate regional health boards and create a new structure that will give more responsibility for health care decision-making to communities. The new structure, which will include the catchment areas of the nine regional hospitals, will support, rather than impede, this devolution of responsibility to communities. (p. 3 and p. 8)

Action
- ✔ Announced October 21, 1999, the transfer of regional health board governance from regional health boards to the Department of Health to provide stability to the health care system during the transition period.
- ✔ Released a transition plan on November 5, 1999, to restructure the province's health care system into one that is more community-responsive and based on nine district health authorities.
- ✔ Passed Health Authorities Act spring 2000.
- ✔ Health Authorities Act came into effect January 31, 2001.

Commitment
Legislate the authority of Community Health Boards to identify and plan programs to meet local priorities. (p. 8)

Action
- ✔ Provided for new, well-defined roles for Community Health Boards through the Health Authorities Act so that boards can plan local health care priorities.
- ✔ Included a $1 million wellness fund in the 2001–02 budget to be used to put Community Health Board wellness plans into effect.

Commitment

Establish the position of Nursing Policy Advisor to work with the Deputy Minister of Health. The Nursing Policy Advisor will work with the nursing profession to develop effective strategies to retain, recruit, and retrain nurses. (p. 7)

Action

- ✔ Hired Nursing Policy Advisor to work with employers, educators, professional associations, unions, and the Department of Health on issues affecting the nursing profession.
- ✔ Launched the Provincial Nursing Network in April 2000.
- ✔ Developed a nurse recruitment brochure and information kit and launched a Nursing Recruitment website.
- ✔ Participated in numerous job fairs including Toronto, PEI, and Newfoundland. The Department of Health will participate in four major nursing job fairs in 2001–02.

Commitment

Work with the nursing profession to make sure their work environment is rewarding and positive, a work environment where nurses know they can properly care for their patients, where nurses know they are valued, and where nurses are empowered to influence clinical practice outcomes. (p. 7)

Action

- ✔ Conducted the most in-depth nursing stakeholder consultations since the Royal Commission and produced the report *Nursing in Nova Scotia: Strengthening the Foundation.*
- ✔ Announced $2 million in winter 2001 to purchase equipment such a new patient lifts. This equipment will enhance the working condition of nurses and is part of our $15 million commitment to new medical equipment.
- ✔ Department of Health is now carrying out major research initiatives related to nursing in partnership with Dalhousie University.
- ✔ Department of Health is developing MIS data system in cooperation with the Registered Nurses Association of Nova Scotia to better meet human resource planning needs.
- ✔ Committed $5 million in April 2001 to launch Nova Scotia's first nursing strategy. The strategy includes a $300,000 commitment to support Workforce Development and Utilization, which includes full utilization of RN/LPN scopes of practice, and Practice Environment Collaboration Program, which includes work force deployment such as staffing and scheduling. The strategy was prepared in cooperation with Provincial Nursing Network, which includes nursing employers, educators, professional associations, unions, and practising nurses.

Commitment
Provide nursing students who agree to work in Nova Scotia with bursaries covering up to 50 per cent of their tuition costs. (p. 7)

Action
- ✔ Offered bursaries to 37 fourth-year nursing students for 1999–2000 and made funding available to licensed practical nurses (LPN) for refresher programs and pharmacy courses.
- ✔ Provided funding for 25 nursing graduate bursaries in the 2000–01 budget.
- ✔ Announced $300,000 in February 2001 for new Co-operative Learning Experience program to provide on the job training for up to 60 nursing students.

Commitment
Provide, as our first priority, the core funding required to establish 100 new full-time equivalent nursing positions. (p. 3 and p. 6)

Action
- ✔ Provided funding for nurses in October 1999 budget. Since then, over 100 casual positions have been converted to full-time.
- ✔ Provided approximately $26 million for increases to nursing salaries in 2000–01.

Commitment
Immediately commit to increase the number of nurse training seats. (p. 6)

Action
- ✔ Continues to provide the funding required to maintain the 75 additional nurse training seats announced in 1999, which includes new satellite training site at University College of Cape Breton.

Commitment
Support professional development opportunities that recognize the increasing complexity and specialization of nursing care and develop nurse practitioner legislation. (p. 7)

Action
- ✔ Released Nova Scotia's first Nursing Strategy in April 2001 and committed $5 million to fund the strategy. Strategy will support both practicing and student nurses, enhance recruitment efforts, and address work force issues.
- ✔ Passed amendments to the Pharmacy Act that will allow nurse practitioners (part of the Primary Care pilot project) to prescribe routine medications.

- ✔ Included $150,000 in the 2000–01 budget for the Dalhousie University Nurse Practitioner Program. Committed to continue this funding in each of the next three years.
- ✔ Introduced legislation in May 2001 to allow for nurse practitioners and to more clearly define the scope of practice of Licensed Practical Nurses.

Commitment
Provide bursaries covering 50 per cent of the cost of tuition for medical students who agree to practise in underserviced areas of Nova Scotia. (p. 7)

Action
- ✔ Announced a debt assistance plan in February 2001 to attract new doctors to communities in need of physicians. The plan provides $15,000 a year to a maximum of $45,000 to new family physicians or designated specialists who establish practises in under-serviced communities.

Commitment
Ensure that doctors, along with other health care providers, have a real voice in shaping the future direction of health care. (p. 7)

Action
- ✔ Included physicians and other health care professionals in the planning and operation of our four primary health care initiatives.
- ✔ Included Medical Society of Nova Scotia representatives on the Physician Resource Planning Steering Committee that will develop a physician resource plan for Nova Scotia.
- ✔ Consulted physicians from across Nova Scotia on our Clinical Services Initiative.

Commitment
Appoint a task force with representation from Nova Scotia's research centres, universities, and medical institutions to identify strategies to develop new medical and health-related opportunities that will both enhance the delivery of health care to Nova Scotians and create new employment opportunities. (p. 9)

Action
- ✔ Named the Nova Scotia Health Research Foundation board of directors in November 2000. The Foundation, with an annual $5 million budget, provides research and support in the area of medicine, health outcomes, health services, and health public policy. The Foundation currently co-sponsors research projects with the Canadian Institute for Innovation, the Canadian Institutes for Health Research, and the Canadian Health Research Foundation.

- ✔ Foundation awarded 33 health research projects on July 26, 2001, and announced $800,000 for Nova Scotia students completing their masters, doctoral, and post-doctoral programs.
- ✔ Announced $15 million in May 2001 to create the Nova Scotia Research and Innovation Trust Fund. This fund has the potential to help research institutions, such as the Atlantic Genome Centre, acquire up to $85 million more in research funding.

Commitment

Establish appropriate criteria for determining the number of beds necessary to provide an adequate level of hospital and nursing home care in each community. (p. 7)

Action

- ✔ Established an ad hoc committee of stakeholders representing the continuing care sector to establish criteria for determining the number of long-term care beds.
- ✔ Identified Cape Breton and Antigonish as pilot sites for new Single Entry Access system for the continuing care sector.
- ✔ Released Clinical Services planning document in February 2001.
- ✔ Committed $1.5 million in the 2001–02 budget to expand the Single Entry Access program. This program significantly reduced wait lists for nursing homes in pilot areas.

Commitment

Immediately undertake a comprehensive assessment of all health care facilities in partnership with health care providers to ensure that Nova Scotians are receiving the right type of care in the appropriate facility. (p. 8)

Action

- ✔ Completed health facilities review.
- ✔ Completed Provincial Health Council's core services review, fall 2000.
- ✔ Released Clinical Services Planning Process in February 2001 which provides health planners with detailed information to support evidence-based decision making. Future phases of clinical services review will examine continuing care, primary care, and emergency health services.
- ✔ Announced funding in the 2001–02 budget to expand the Single Entry Access system province wide.

Commitment

Make public all evidenced-based requirements for change and initiate changes as soon as possible. A PC Government is committed to ensuring health care resources are directed by real, measurable evidence. (p. 6)

Action

✔ Released Clinical Services Planning Document in February 2001. The document was positively received by health care professionals and administrators as a critical tool in planning acute care services based on evidence.

Commitment

Conduct a thorough audit of the cost and clinical outcomes of providing ground ambulance service in the province and seek advice to determine the government's legal obligations with respect to its contract with Emergency Medical Care. (p. 9)

Action

✔ Department of Finance Corporate Internal Audit branch is performing clinical performance and value for money audit of ground ambulance service. This audit will include an evaluation by an emergency clinical consultant.

Commitment

Conduct an independent review of the Environmental Health Clinic to ensure that programs and services are meeting the health needs of Nova Scotians who have environmental illness. (p. 9)

Action

✔ Released review of Environmental Health Clinic in December 2000 which identified areas for improving service to patients, including calling for better cooperation between the clinic, Dalhousie University, and Capital Health District.

Commitment

Mandate the Provincial Health Council to hold province-wide public consultations to develop a list of core clinical services that must be provided at the community, regional, and provincial levels and to develop a Patient's Bill of Rights for government approval. (p. 7)

Action

✔ Provincial Health Council conducted province-wide consultations at the request of Premier Hamm.

✔ Council released two reports in fall 2000: *Health for Nova Scotians* and *Expectations for Health and Health Care in Nova Scotia*.

Commitment

Dedicate a portion of the tobacco tax to fund new health promotion and disease prevention initiatives, including programs designed to discourage tobacco and other substance abuse among youth. (p. 9)

Action

- ✔ Premier Hamm announced a new Youth Advisory Committee on Smoking and Youth in June 2000, along with a $450,000 funding commitment to implement tobacco control measures.
- ✔ Announced $4 per carton increase in tobacco taxes in 2001 with a commitment to dedicate a portion of the increased revenue to smoking cessation programs.

Commitment

Support family care givers by committing $1 million to the expansion of respite services. (p. 9)

Action

- ✔ Included an additional $500,000 in the October 1999 budget for respite services for the remaining six months of the budget year.
- ✔ Included $1 million in the 2000–01 budget to expand respite for care givers.

Commitment

Undertake a comprehensive review of the delivery of mental health services, particularly as they relate to child and adolescent mental health. (p. 9)

Action

- ✔ Completed the review in May 2000 and released findings on June 15.
- ✔ Announced plans in May 2001 to blend children and youth mental health services into one coordinated system in order to provide closer-to-home, integrated, mental health services.

Commitment

Introduce legislation governing medical laboratory technologists. (p. 8)

Action

- ✔ Passed legislation spring 2000.

Commitment

Commit $2 million to reduce assessment wait-times for children believed to have autism or pervasive developmental delay and to provide early treatment for these children. (p. 9)

Action

✔ Dedicated $2 million in the 2000–01 budget to autism spectrum disorders. Announced new community-based early identification and intervention service model (EIIS) on June 6, 2000. Maintained increased funding in 2001–02 budget.

Commitment

Integrate Health and Community Services programs, particularly as they relate to the delivery of primary care and continuing care, so that appropriate and early interventions can be taken to prevent unnecessary costs to the system. (p. 8)

Action

✔ Transferred Residential Care facilities and Community-Based Options that provide services to seniors to the Department of Health on April 1, 2000.

✔ Transferred Adult Protection Program to the Department of Health in April 2000.

✔ Developing a joint working group to address issues identified in the Kendrick Report.

✔ Enhance coordination of Department of Health and Department of Community Services programs by implementing Single Entry Access. This will enable more appropriate identification of needs of Nova Scotians.

✔ Departments of Health and Community Services announced plans in May 2001 to blend children and youth mental health services into one coordinated system in order to provide closer to home, integrated mental health services.

Commitment

Establish an Information and Medical Technology Advisory Committee with broad geographic representation to ensure technology dollars are spent fairly across the province and to promote the use of new cost-effective technologies and information systems. (p. 9)

Action

✔ Announced $15 million for new medical equipment in February 2001, including specialized x-rays, ultrasound, CT scanners, and anaesthesia-monitoring equipment. Selected the new medical equipment based on priorities submitted by hospitals and nursing homes.

- ✔ Department of Health developed, with representation from across the province, a high-level implementation plan for a hospital information system. This system will link 34 hospitals and will provide patients, doctors, nurses, and administrators with easier, faster access to health information.
- ✔ Entered into a license agreement with Meditech in May 2001 for a hospital information system. A Health Information System Steering Committee and advisory committee will guide the project. The total cost of the project, which began in 2000–01, will be $30 million over three years.

Education, the Foundation

"A strong education system is the foundation of an economy of sustained growth. Government will dedicate itself to an education system which is adequately funded, fully focused on the student and the classroom which will prepare young Nova Scotians to compete in the job markets of today and tomorrow."

Commitment

Immediately establish a task force with broad geographic representation that will hold public hearings on existing school board boundaries and make recommendations for amending existing school board boundaries so that they properly reflect reasonable community input. (p. 16)

Action

- ✔ Established School Board Boundary Review Task Force which held public consultations. Task Force submitted its report to government in February 2000.
- ✔ Established new governance model for South West School Board in June 2000.
- ✔ Announced a steering committee on July 20, 2001, to guide the evaluation process of the new governance model for South West School Board. The committee consists of representatives from district school boards, the Nova Scotia School Boards Association, the Association of Nova Scotia Education Administrators, and the Department of Education.

Commitment

Establish by law or regulation a uniform, province-wide standard for primary classes on the basis of five days a week. (p. 16)

Action

- ✔ Continues to honour the July 5, 1999, decision to offer grade primary in every school in the province.

Commitment

Ensure that resources are allocated fairly so that students across Nova Scotia have equitable access to comparable equipment, supplies, and learning aids. (p. 16)

Action

- ✔ Announced that government will once again finance and own schools because the P3 school construction program increased the gap between those schools that have and those that don't. Additionally, schools are now being designed and built according to modern and standard design criteria—ensuring the more equitable use of education dollars.

- ✔ Saved more than $190,000 in fall 2000 by maximizing bulk purchasing arrangements for school textbooks and software resources. Committed to reinvesting the savings in student resource materials to meet needs in targeted areas of study. The fall 2000 savings were used to purchase more textbooks. Department of Education announced that the new policy guaranteed that for the first time all 12,500 Grade 11 students would receive a textbook for the new math course being implemented.
- ✔ The Information Economy Initiative computer program is providing over 6,000 computers to secondary schools. These computers are distributed using a per capita formula to ensure equity and to provide computers to schools not included in construction projects.
- ✔ Provides E-mail accounts to all students and teachers in Nova Scotia, regardless of location, through the Department of Education's centralized E-mail service.

Commitment

Develop a multi-year plan for addressing the need for additional resources for students with special needs. (p. 16)

Action

- ✔ Struck a committee of stakeholders to examine Special Needs Policy in fall 2000.
- ✔ Committed an additional $3 million in 2001–02 budget to support the needs of special needs students.
- ✔ Announced a partnership agreement between Nova Scotia libraries and the Canadian Institute for the Blind Library in May 2001 to make reading materials more readily available to Nova Scotians with print disabilities, including Nova Scotians who are blind or have visual impairment or physical or learning disabilities. The partnership agreement covers 75 public libraries, 12 university libraries, and 14 community college libraries.

Commitment

Establish and enforce a standard code of conduct for students and teachers that will emphasize mutual respect, responsibility, and discipline. (p. 16)

Action

- ✔ Struck a committee with representation from parents, students, the Nova Scotia Teachers' Union, the NS School Boards' Association, and the Nova Scotia Federation of Home and School Associations to develop a code of conduct that emphasizes respect, responsibility, and self-discipline in all our schools.
- ✔ Released a draft Code of Conduct in March 2001 which is now being reviewed by stakeholders.
- ✔ Developing a video and guide based on the best practices of schools involved in the Positive School Initiative.

Commitment
Ensure that our education system reflects the diverse nature of Nova Scotia's communities. (p. 16)

Action
- ✔ Amended the Education Act to provide for an African Canadian seat on Nova Scotia's school boards. School Board elections held in October of 2000 resulted in designated African Canadian representation.
- ✔ Announced new resource tools for Nova Scotia's Acadian Students in March 2001.
- ✔ Signed two new agreements with the federal government in May 2001 that will contribute $46.4 million for French language education in the province. The three- and four-year agreements include detailed action plans for building on existing French programs and introducing new ones.
- ✔ Allocated $100,000 to help school boards implement the racial equity policy.

Commitment
Establish a special Capital Improvement Fund, administered by the School Capital Construction Committee, to respond to emergency health problems in our schools. (p. 16)

Action
- ✔ Announced that the School Capital Construction Committee will be re-instated to replace the P3 school construction process and asked the committee to provide government with recommendations related to the most urgent priorities for school renovations.
- ✔ Allocated approximately $20 million in additional funding for school renovations in the 2000–01 budget.
- ✔ Set aside $19 million for 2001–02 year to repair and upgrade schools.
- ✔ Announced in July 2001 a new approach to allocating renovation dollars. The new approach will allow for bulk tendering and reduced costs. This means more schools will be repaired.

Commitment
Establish a long-term funding basis for our schools. (p. 16)

Action
- ✔ Education Consultative Forum, a group consisting of the Deputy Minister of Education and all school board superintendents, directed the Education Funding Committee to examine and recommend a new funding formula.

Commitment

Establish a visible, consistent, and functional education system based on the most appropriate international standards and use these standards to prepare students for post-secondary education and the workforce. (p. 15)

Action

- ✔ Increased funding to Nova Scotia School Boards in the 2000–01 and 2001–02 budgets.
- ✔ Launched the Active Young Readers Program in 2000 for students from grades primary to three. Expanded program in 2001–02 to cover all elementary grade levels.
- ✔ Committed to test the literacy levels of all grade six students and, for the first time, to share the results with the parents of all children and with teachers at the junior high level.
- ✔ Included an additional $4.2 million in the 2000–01 budget to expand the number of seats of the Nova Scotia Community College and its virtual campus.
- ✔ Committed $1.5 million in the 2001–02 budget to launch the Nova Scotia School for Adult Learning. The school will coordinate and enhance programs that help adults get their high school diploma.
- ✔ Announced in June 2001 that five rural-based schools would participate in a new Advanced Studies Program that uses the most advanced information and communications technology to challenge students ready to pursue advanced studies.

Commitment

Work to expand opportunities that enable transition for pre-graduate high school students who wish to pursue vocational trades. (p. 17)

Action

- ✔ The Nova Scotia Community College is working with provincial school boards to implement pre-college training programs starting at grade 11. This initiative is designed to keep high school students in school by providing vocational training opportunities as alternatives to university. Memorandums of understanding have been signed with the six regional English school boards. A director has been appointed to guide implementation of this joint initiative.
- ✔ Funded *Youth Pathways and Transitions* in the 2001–02 budget to help high school students bridge to community college and Nova Scotia's labour market.

Commitment

Track employment opportunities and provide information to guidance counselors in a timely way. (p. 16)

Action

✔ Launched Nova Scotia's work information website in May 2000. This is a valuable clearinghouse of labour market information for teachers, guidance counselors, human resource personnel, and others.

Commitment

Establish, in consultation with business and labour, a comprehensive and modern apprenticeship program. (p. 17)

Action

✔ Announced July 20, 2001, that the Provincial Apprenticeship Board and Apprenticeship Training Division would hold public consultations to receive public and industry input on revisions to the Apprenticeship Training Act and Regulations.

Commitment

Create a Jobs Opportunity Bureau with membership from government, business, labour, universities, community colleges, and the public school system. The bureau's mandate is to measure the effectiveness of youth strategies, forecast future labour market requirements, and maintain an inter-active web-site to keep young Nova Scotians apprised of the latest training and employment opportunities. (p. 13)

Action

✔ Launched a work information website May 2000.

✔ Nova Scotia Youth Secretariat launched a new website targeted directly to youth in spring 2001. The site, developed and designed with the help of Nova Scotia youth, provides information related to education, training, employment, career counselling, and youth participation.

✔ Established an inter-departmental Labour Market Information Committee to address labour market information needs within the province. A federal-provincial committee is also in place to ensure that activities are coordinated and to examine opportunities for joint initiatives.

Commitment

Ensure that all teachers are given the professional development opportunities they need to effectively implement curriculum changes and new teaching methodology and technology. (p. 16)

Action

✔ Announced changes to teacher certification in fall 2000 that requires 100 hours of professional development training during each five-year period. Professional development provisions will be reviewed after three years to ensure they are achieving effective results.

Commitment

Negotiate with the federal government to adopt the fair and equitable policy of having federal funding follow the student to the province in which the student chooses to study. (p. 17)

Action

✔ Department of Education and Finance officials continue to urge the federal government to amend its funding formula.

Commitment

Double the existing Civil Service Career Start Program to provide graduating university students with opportunities for work experience within the provincial government. (p. 17)

Action

✔ Provided funding in the 2000–01 budget to double number of participating students.

Rebuilding Our Economy

"It is government's role to establish an economic and regulatory environment that encourages the private sector and facilitates economic growth and job creation. We believe that Nova Scotians are looking for long-term employment opportunities that will enable them to enjoy Nova Scotia's quality of life. We believe that these can and should best be provided by the private sector. We believe that it is the role of government to put in place programs and to create an environment that encourages and supports Nova Scotian entrepreneurs."

Commitment

Streamline the Department of Economic Development so it focuses on infrastructure, training, and marketing, rather than on simply passing out grants, loans, and loan guarantees. (p. 11)

Action

- ✔ Released the Economic Growth Strategy Opportunities for Prosperity in October 2000 which focuses on three elements (infrastructure, training, and marketing) as outlined in *Strong Leadership ... a clear course*.
- ✔ Announced that a Crown corporation, Nova Scotia Business Inc., will make day-to-day business decisions. Passed legislation creating this new private-sector driven agency during the fall 2000 session of the legislature.
- ✔ Transferred responsibility for the Labour Market Secretariat to the Department of Economic Development in recognition of the need to ensure information relative to Nova Scotia's labour needs are more closely aligned with Economic Development's policy decisions.

Commitment

Convene public Economic Round Table sessions with cabinet and business, labour, municipal, community, and educational leaders to identify priority issues and develop co-operative strategies to achieve sustained economic growth. (p. 12)

Action

- ✔ Held over 100 public meetings across the province to develop *Opportunities for Prosperity*, Nova Scotia's first economic growth strategy in a decade.

Commitment

Make Nova Scotia the most attractive place to do business in Atlantic Canada by guaranteeing that the costs imposed by government are the lowest in the region. (p. 11)

Action

- ✔ Created a new Business Climate Division of Economic Development. A new Business Climate Report Card that monitors Nova Scotia's competitiveness is presently being developed.
- ✔ Developing a made-in-Nova Scotia framework for attracting investment.

Commitment

Establish clear criteria for the Nova Scotia Community Economic Development Fund, including funding levels from the economic development budget and initiating Community Development Bonds with special emphasis on areas of high unemployment. (p. 12)

Action

- ✔ Eleven projects that secure substantial levels of investment that might have otherwise left the province have been approved. These projects are evidence of substantial growth in and local support for Community Economic Development Investment Funds (CEDIF) within the province, particularly in rural Nova Scotia.

Commitment

Amend Nova Scotia's tendering policies to ensure they offer Nova Scotia companies the same competitive advantage that other Atlantic Canadian provinces offer companies in their respective jurisdictions. (p. 12)

Action

- ✔ Amended tendering policies in December 2000 to include a preference for Nova Scotian suppliers if trade agreements permit. As well, if a jurisdiction gives preference to its suppliers, or handicaps Nova Scotia suppliers, then tenders from that province will be treated in like manner through the NS Government tendering process. The changes also include expanded enforcement of interprovincial reciprocity agreements.
- ✔ Developing a Nova Scotian suppliers list to ensure that Nova Scotian suppliers have timely notice of tender calls.
- ✔ Launched an electronic commerce system.

Commitment
Work with communities to ensure that highways and secondary roads are planned and designed to optimize economic growth, and to ensure that planning is done on a non-partisan basis. (p. 12)

Action
✔ Completed phase one of a study that examines the link between highways and economic growth in NS. Held consultations with key NS business and industry leaders as well as Regional Development Authorities. Phase two of the report will include a review of highway performance standards and practices that are typically associated with greater economic returns, such as the elements of a strategic network of highways.

Commitment
Act as a facilitator with business and communities regarding joint transportation initiatives. (p. 26)

Action
✔ Completed a strategy for coordinating transportation initiatives through Voluntary Planning in December 1999. Fourteen of 18 items identified in the strategy that involve Transportation and Public Works are being implemented, such as the development of a new advertising signage policy, implementing regulations relative to van transportation, and conducting pilot studies of rest areas.

Commitment
Aggressively claim Nova Scotia's jurisdictional control over the Laurentian Sub-basin as noted in the 1984 Canada/Nova Scotia Offshore Accord. (p. 13)

Action
✔ Secured the legal services of Yves Fortier, one of the world's leading experts in international law, to present Nova Scotia's case before the panel hearing the case.
✔ Premier Hamm also appeared before the panel and made Nova Scotia's case for maintaining the present boundary line.

Commitment

Appoint a task force with representatives from Nova Scotia's research centres, universities, and medical institutions to identify strategies to develop new medical and health-related opportunities that will both enhance the delivery of health care to Nova Scotians and create new employment opportunities. (p. 13)

Action

- ✔ Launched Nova Scotia Research Trust Fund in May 2001, providing $15 million to help Nova Scotia's research institutions, including health and life sciences research institutions, secure further research funding from the Canadian Foundation for Innovation. The fund will be managed by an administrative body comprising all of Nova Scotia's university and college presidents and three government representatives.
- ✔ Life Sciences Association launched in May 2001. This multi-stakeholder group which includes representatives from government, research institutions, the education and health care sectors, and private enterprise provides for an integrated, collaborative approach to building a prosperous life sciences industry.

Commitment

Establish a Buy Nova Scotia First program, an aggressive multi-media marketing campaign to increase consumer awareness of Nova Scotian products and services. (p. 12)

Action

- ✔ Working with the private sector and community stakeholders to develop a comprehensive web portal that will bring together the province's marketing resources. Through this one website, searchers will be linked to many other websites including those about export development and e-commerce.

Commitment

As part of the Buy Nova Scotia First program, actively promote Nova Scotia's arts and craft industry as an integral and important sector of our economy. (p. 12)

Action

- ✔ The web portal being developed will be used to promote and sell Nova Scotian products, particularly crafts, online.
- ✔ Contributed to new initiative spearheaded by the Cape Breton Centre for Craft and Design that is designed to expand export markets for Cape Breton craftspeople.

Commitment

Implement legislation already introduced by the PC caucus to reduce job-killing red tape by appointing a full-time regulatory review officer with a mandate to report annually to the legislature with recommendations for reducing bureaucratic obstacles to job creation. (p. 11)

Action

- ✔ Announced regulatory changes to the Electronic Filing Act in January 2000. The changes make it easier for business to interact with government by reducing paper work and the number of forms and procedures business must go through to interact with government.
- ✔ Introduced the Electronic Commerce Act in October 2000 to recognize the legal validity of electronic transactions and make it easier to do business on-line.
- ✔ Launched the Nova Scotia Business Registry in 2000, which is recognized as the country's most innovative and cost-effective approach for providing service to business.
- ✔ Announced a Red Tape Reduction Task Force on May 11, 2000. The task force held public meetings throughout Nova Scotia in September and released an interim report in November.
- ✔ Announced new regulations in December 2000 that simplify the way pre-accident earnings are reported to the Worker's Compensation Board, thereby reducing the paper burden for employers.
- ✔ Committed funds in the 2001–02 budget to expand on-line services to business through the Nova Scotia Business Registry.
- ✔ Introduced legislation in spring 2001 to launch Registry 2000, which will create a modern electronic land registry.
- ✔ Announced in June 2001 that Nova Scotia, along with New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, and Newfoundland and Labrador, approved in principle a plan to establish uniform trucking legislation. Uniform trucking regulations will reduce inter-provincial trade barriers and help spur economic development throughout the Atlantic region.

Commitment

Aggressively market new initiatives that demonstrate that industrial Cape Breton is much more economically diverse than many believe. (p. 14)

Action

- ✔ Committed funds in the 2001–02 budget to support new marketing initiative for Cape Breton.
- ✔ When fully operational, the Buy Nova Scotia First program will also focus on Cape Breton products.
- ✔ Committed $12 million to the Cape Breton Growth Fund, which has been used to provide payroll rebates to new companies locating on the Island such as EDS.

Commitment
Provide a more focused and sustained effort in marketing Cape Breton as a first-class, year-round tourism destination. (p. 14)

Action
- ✔ Expanded the season for the Port Hastings Visitor Information Centre to open in March and close in December. Previously, it opened in May and closed in October.
- ✔ Located a tourism development officer in Sydney.

Commitment
Implement policies and measures such as tax incentives that recognize and respond to the need for stimulating the economies of rural Nova Scotia. (p. 12)

Action
- ✔ Increased the Film Industry Tax Credit to 35 per cent in rural Nova Scotia from 32.5 per cent.
- ✔ Established a $1.5 million revolving loan fund to help Nova Scotia's boat building industry expand into the pleasure craft business.
- ✔ Included an additional $250,000 in the 2000–01 budget to help market cultural strengths and a further $400,000 in the 2001–02 budget for new cultural partnerships that will generate increased export sales of cultural products.
- ✔ Committed an additional $19 million to improve Nova Scotia's rural roads since April 2000.
- ✔ Extended the tax credit for investing in Community Economic Development Investment Funds to December 31, 2003.

Commitment
Work with the business community to establish clear and binding principles and policies when offering incentives to attract new business and jobs or to support the expansion of existing successful business. (p. 11)

Action
- ✔ Prepared Nova Scotia's economic growth strategy, *Opportunities for Prosperity*, after extensive consultation with business leaders and representatives.
- ✔ Passed legislation creating Nova Scotia Business Inc. in fall 2000 to make day-to-day investment decisions on behalf of government.

Commitment
Aggressively market Nova Scotia's products abroad. (p. 12)

Action
- ✔ Led numerous trade missions that have helped secure approximately $30 million in contracts for Nova Scotia companies. The Government of Nova Scotia has participated in trade missions to China, Japan, Washington, New England, Boston, and Atlanta.
- ✔ Promoted Port of Halifax to an audience of shipping executives in New York in December 1999.
- ✔ Promoted Nova Scotia's Oil and Gas industry during oil and gas conferences in Houston, Texas.

Commitment
Vigorously promote Nova Scotia as a film, video, and multimedia production location, with tax credits and policies that are comparable to those in other jurisdictions, and remove the asset cap placed on the tax credit. (p. 12)

Action
- ✔ Removed asset cap on tax credits. Increased tax credit in rural Nova Scotia to 35 per cent from 32.5 per cent. Reduced tax credit in Metro to 30 per cent from 32.5 per cent.

Commitment
Actively work to ensure that all parts of Nova Scotia benefit from offshore gas and oil exploration and development by establishing an Energy Council of experts to advise Cabinet on the development of Nova Scotia's Offshore. (p. 13)

Action
- ✔ Announced the framework and membership of the Energy Council in June 2000.

Commitment
Establish a comprehensive energy policy that includes all domestic energy sources and reduces our dependence on imported oil. Our energy policy's central priority will be to ensure province-wide economic development at the lowest possible cost to consumers and business. (p. 20)

Action
- ✔ Released a discussion paper, *Powering Nova Scotia's Economy*, in winter 2001 that will be used to develop a new energy strategy for Nova Scotia. The discussion paper outlines the values, principles, and goals for Nova Scotia's energy sector and asks Nova Scotians for their input.

- ✔ Announced May 2001 that the Government of Nova Scotia will host a major energy forum that will include regional, national, and international experts in energy matters as part of the process to develop a new energy strategy for the province.
- ✔ Held Energy Forum in June 2001, bringing together international experts on energy matters.

Commitment
Insist that the federal government complete long-awaited upgrades to the Halifax International Airport. (p. 26)

Action
- ✔ Halifax International Airport Authority assumed control of the airport in February 2000 after the federal government announced funding upgrades.

Commitment
Ensure that all mining regulations are clear, efficient, and effective regarding safety and environmental practices, monitoring, assessments, permitting, inspection, and enforcement. (p. 29)

Action
- ✔ Tabled Bill 12 on October 12, 1999, to strengthen and clarify the Mineral Resources Act according to recommendations made by the Westray Inquiry. It passed third reading on November 16, 1999.

Commitment
Ensure that the federal government clearly defines who is eligible to participate in the native food fishery. (p. 28)

Action
- ✔ The Premier and Ministers for Aboriginal Affairs and Fisheries and Aquaculture have repeatedly urged the federal government to promptly introduce an action plan for a regulated fishery that is fair to native and non-native fishermen.

Commitment
Immediately meet with representatives of Nova Scotia's fishing sector to establish a more effective joint process for advocating on behalf of the industry with the Government of Canada. (p. 28)

Action
- ✔ Announced government's support of principles adopted by the Atlantic Fishermen's Alliance in fall 1999, following a meeting with fish harvesting and processing groups. These principles assert that conservation must be the first priority of fisheries management and that there must be only one fish management authority—the federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans.
- ✔ Invited Nova Scotia fishing interests in April 2001 to participate in review of Fish Processors and Fish Buyers Licensing Policy.
- ✔ A forum of industry and departmental representatives now meets twice a year to discuss issues of common concern to the industry. The most recent council meeting provided an opportunity for the industry and government to discuss current issues, including the Department of Fisheries and Oceans' Atlantic Policy review and the aquaculture sector.

Commitment
Aggressively represent Nova Scotian fishing interests to Ottawa. (p. 28)

Action
- ✔ Signed a new agreement with the Government of Canada and all provinces on inter-jurisdictional cooperation.

Commitment
Tackle the growing problem of illegal fishing by strengthening fisheries enforcement efforts. (p. 28)

Action
- ✔ Allocated an additional $125,000 in the 2001–02 budget for fisheries enforcement.

Commitment
Enact the provisions of the Forests Act. (p. 28)

Action
- ✔ Proclaimed amendments to the Forests Act in April 2000.

Commitment

Undertake a comprehensive review of the current state of our forests to ensure we have a reliable understanding of the impact of recent harvesting practices on the future sustainability of our forests. (p. 28)

Action

- ✔ Announced in April 2000 that an analysis of Nova Scotia's wood supply shows current harvesting levels on small, privately-operated woodlands are not sustainable.
- ✔ Announced new Forest Sustainability regulations that will increase silviculture on private woodlands from $3 million to $9 million per year.
- ✔ Signed an agreement with Association of Sustainable Forestry in April 2001 to carry out a silviculture pilot project on small private woodlands.
- ✔ Included an additional $1.3 million for silviculture on Crown lands in the 2001–02 budget, bringing the yearly total to $3.5 million.
- ✔ Announced on July 11, 2001, that government would establish a Crown-land silviculture fund to help ensure that harvest levels on Crown lands are sustainable.

Commitment

Commit to publish buyer registration information annually. (p. 29)

Action

- ✔ All registered buyers who acquire more than 5,000 cubic metres of primary forests products in a year must submit an annual wood acquisition plan under regulations to the Forests Act.

Commitment

Insist that the Government of Canada provide drought assistance to Nova Scotia farmers in accordance with the needs of Nova Scotia farmers. (p. 27)

Action

- ✔ Premier Hamm urged all premiers at the Annual Premier's Conference in Quebec City in 1999 to unanimously endorse the province's position that the federal government must cooperate with the provinces to improve access to federal disaster relief.
- ✔ Increased funding for farm income support in Nova Scotia to historically unprecedented levels through Safety Nets and the Weather Related Loss Program. Over the past two years actual provincial expenditures for Net Income Stabilization Account, the Canadian Farm Income Program/AIDA, Crop Insurance, and the Weather Related Loss Program have totalled $20.6 million. At no time in the past has the province played a more sizeable role in direct

farm income support. In the fiscal year 1998–99, provincial direct support for farms was $12,437,930; in 2001–02 it is $16,073,900.

- ✔ Signed an agreement to develop a new national agriculture policy that, among its other objectives, would improve farmers' ability to manage the inherent risks of farming at the Federal-Provincial and Territorial Ministers of Agriculture Conference in June 2001.
- ✔ At the Annual Premier's Conference in August 2001, Premier Hamm called for a detailed report of what steps could be taken to support farmers in the future.

Commitment

Establish a New Farm Entrants Program to encourage young Nova Scotians to continue the tradition of family farming in Nova Scotia, through low-interest loans. (p. 27)

Action

- ✔ Provided $600,000 in the 2000–01 budget for the New Farm Entrants Program, administered through the Nova Scotia Farm Loan Board. The program is now operational.
- ✔ Nova Scotia Farm Loan Board has extended $16 million (over 6 month period) to Agriculture in loans to support capital projects for the strategic investment in the industry. Primary target clients are young farmers.

Commitment

Strengthen the partnership between the Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture and the Department of Agriculture and Marketing and together develop programs to ensure the sustainability of the agricultural sector. (p. 27)

Action

- ✔ Tabled Bill 10, the Farm Practices Act, on October 27, 1999, the need for which was identified by the Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture. Invited public input until early 2000. Passed the Farm Practices Act, spring 2000.
- ✔ Introduced two Bills in fall 2000 that were widely supported by the Federation of Agriculture: The Agricultural Marshland Conservation Act and the Dairy Industry Act.
- ✔ Allocated $2.2 million in the 2001–02 budget to provide agricultural specialist services through new *Agriculture Development Institute*, an industry lead and controlled agency.
- ✔ Held an Outlook Conference in March 2001 to identify future priorities of the industry.
- ✔ Signed a new national agreement in July 2001 to support Nova Scotia chicken producers. The agreement will bring all provinces under a single, market-responsive and national supply-management system.

Commitment
Maintain the Farm Loan Board as a separate entity. (p. 27)

Action
✔ Farm Loan Board continues to be operated as a separate entity.

Commitment
Re-establish the Department of Tourism and Culture as a separate department of government whose mandate includes promotion of museums, parks, and historic homes. (p. 15)

Action
✔ Established the Department of Tourism and Culture as a separate department to enhance the unparalleled growth experienced by these two key industries.

Commitment
Strengthen the Nova Scotia Tourism Partnership Council to ensure it includes the key participants in our tourism sector. (p. 15)

Action
✔ Expanded the Tourism Partnership Council in January 2001 by appointing six new members. An industry-led selection committee reviewed and recommended the appointees following a public call for applications. The appointments provide more diverse industry representation on the Council.

Commitment
Develop, in partnership with the tourism sector, themes and programs for marketing Nova Scotia as a year-round tourism destination. (p. 15)

Action
✔ Began an aggressive marketing and promotional campaign to promote travel to the province between January and April. The new campaign includes television, print, and radio advertising, along with information on Nova Scotia's website.
✔ The Tourism Partnership Council announced a new spring campaign in May 2001 as part of its long-term strategy to promote year-round tourism in the province.
✔ Announced in May 2001 that Nova Scotia's Visitor Information Centres would be open longer.
✔ Sponsored regional marketing workshops in May 2001, in partnership with Tourism Industry Association. These workshops were designed to help tourism operators market and package their products and services.

Commitment
Commit to no more toll highways. (p. 25)

Action
✔ Former Transportation and Public Works Minister Gordon Balser advised federal Transport Minister David Collenette in writing that Nova Scotia supports a ban on future toll highways. This commitment has since been reiterated by Transportation and Public Works Minister Ron Russell.

Commitment
Demand that the federal government return a significant portion of the roughly $137 million in fuel taxes it collects annually in Nova Scotia as a contribution to our highway strategy. (p. 26)

Action
✔ Premier John Hamm joined with his colleagues at both the Annual Premiers' Conference and the Council of Maritime Premiers to unanimously endorse a national infrastructure program, with emphasis on highway improvements. The low return by Ottawa on federal fuel taxes is always highlighted.

✔ Made numerous requests through letters and ministerial meetings for the Government of Canada to return a greater portion of the $137 million it takes from Nova Scotians each year in fuel taxes.

✔ The Federal Government's failure to provide fair highway funding to Nova Scotia is also a key element in Premier John Hamm's Campaign for Fairness.

✔ Premier Hamm once again called on Ottawa at the Annual Premier's Conference in August 2001 to become a real partner in rebuilding Canada's transportation infrastructure and to establish a national transportation policy.

Commitment
Develop a ten-year plan for completion of 100 series highways upgrading and twinning. (p. 25)

Action
✔ Released a ten-year needs assessment study in May 2001 that identified a $3.4 billion infrastructure deficit. Used the study to reiterate the need for a new cost-sharing agreement with the federal government.

Commitment

Dedicate all taxes raised through motor vehicle licensing and fuel sales to highway construction and maintenance to provide a solid base for highway spending. This funding may be increased depending on public need and available revenues. (p. 26)

Action

✔ Increased funding for roads and highways in each year of its mandate, including $10 million in 2000–01 for rural roads and $11 million in capital funding in 2001–02 for roads and bridges. Government remains committed to increasing funding over the next two years—all revenues in the Department of Transportation and Public Works not allocated toward operational costs will be put into road and highway improvements.

Commitment

Work with municipalities and the federal government to fund essential infrastructure projects such as water and sewer services. (p. 21)

Action

✔ Approved five projects totalling $676,000 under the Capital Assistance Program in September 1999.

✔ Premier John Hamm highlighted the need for a new national infrastructure program at the Annual Premiers' Conference in Quebec City in August 1999. His position was endorsed unanimously by all premiers and territorial leaders.

✔ Signed a six-year infrastructure agreement with the federal government on October 4. Agreement will mean a $196 million investment in infrastructure upgrades across the province. The first priority of the infrastructure program will be sewer and water upgrades. Other initiatives to be funded under the agreement include local transportation, cultural and recreational facilities, rural and remote telecommunications, high-speed Internet access for public institutions, and affordable housing.

✔ Announced 38 projects, worth more $41 million, through the Infrastructure agreement to date.

Building Better, More Efficient, and More Accountable Government

"Government will live within its means. By spending responsibly, we will protect our ability to guarantee priorities like health care and education for the future."

Commitment
Balanced budget by year three. (p. 3)

Action
- ✔ Undertook numerous initiatives to balance the budget including reducing the size and scope of government and initiating new accountability requirements.
- ✔ 2001–02 budget estimates government will finish 2000–01 with a deficit of $199 million, an improvement of $69 million over the amount budgeted. A deficit of $91 million is expected in 2001–02.

Commitment
Eliminate deficit financing and restore fiscal openness by keeping one set of books. (p. 18)

Action
- ✔ Released consolidated financial statements for the 1998–99 fiscal year on September 27, 1999, which are consistent with new, modern and Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP).
- ✔ Reconfirmed the use of GAAP for all future fiscal years in the October 1999 budget.
- ✔ Reaffirmed government's commitment to improving financial accountability in the 2000–01 budget with amendments to the Financial Measures Act. These amendments include new accountability measures and modern accounting methods for Tangible Capital Assets.

Commitment
Implement legislation requiring all new program costs to be approved from identified departmental budgets. (p. 18)

Action
- ✔ Implemented on June 8, 2000, when the Financial Measures Act became law.

Commitment
Repatriate the debts owed to foreign lenders. (p. 18)

Action
✔ Reduced the foreign currency denominated to 30.8 per cent of the debt portfolio in 2001 (excluding sinking funds and debt retirement funds) based on the face value of Canadian dollars, down from 35.6 per cent one year earlier, and down from 72 per cent in 1995. Without any further management-induced changes, it will be 20 per cent or less by 2004.

Commitment
No more tax dollars for Sysco. (p. 3)

Action
✔ No new money was allocated toward Sysco's operations. Presently liquidating Sysco's assets.

Commitment
Conduct a thorough, open, cost-benefit analysis of the decision to withdraw from Atlantic Lotto to ensure that it is in the best interests of Nova Scotians. (p. 19)

Action
✔ Renegotiated a new and far-better deal for Nova Scotia and signed a new partnership agreement with the Atlantic provinces that will see Nova Scotia remain within Atlantic Lotto.

Commitment
Undertake a comprehensive review and cost-benefit analysis of the P3 process and contracts to ensure that only the best possible approach is used in school construction, renovation, and operation. (p. 5 and p. 16)

Action
✔ Completed P3 review. Announced that government will not proceed with the P3 model for future school construction because of cost overruns and more modern accounting policies that do not favour private ownership of our schools.
✔ Announced new design standards for school construction and a more cost-effective process for determining site selection.

Commitment

Amend the Freedom of Information Act to appoint the FOIPOP Review Officer on a full-time basis and to require full disclosure of public-private partnering agreements, including school construction. (p. 5 and p. 19)

Action

- ✔ Tabled Bill 14 to amend the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act on November 3, 1999.
- ✔ Passed Bill 14 on November 18, 1999.

Commitment

Undertake a comprehensive review of the compensation program for victims of institutional abuse to ensure the process is fair and upholds the rights of both the victims and the accused. (p. 22)

Action

- ✔ Appointed Justice Fred Kaufman in November 1999 to carry out the review.

Commitment

Establish and enforce a Code of Conduct for Cabinet Ministers and senior public servants. (p. 5 and p. 19)

Action

- ✔ Introduced Code of Conduct for Cabinet Ministers, fall 1999. Legislation passed, spring 2000.
- ✔ Approved Code of Conduct for senior public servants, July 2000.
- ✔ Introduced Lobbyist Registration Act, March 2001, which is now before the House.

Commitment

Reduce the size of government, starting with Cabinet. (p. 19)

Action

- ✔ Reduced Cabinet to 12 members, including the Premier. Previous government had a cabinet of 14, including the Premier. Cuts resulted in fewer executive assistants and a reduced staff in the Office of Premier.
- ✔ Announced in April 2000 one of the most aggressive restructuring initiatives ever undertaken in Nova Scotia.
- ✔ Introduced Bill 20 in April 2001 to restructure government and improve accountability throughout government. Bill 20 amends 11 acts and allows for significant structural changes, including the amalgamation of six departments to three. Bill 20 responds to recommendations of the Task Force on Fiscal Management, which called for departments of like function to be merged.

- ✔ Eliminated dozens of agencies, boards, and commissions since assuming office. More are either in the process of being repealed through legislation or are under review. Among those eliminated are Sydney Steel Corporation Board, Halifax Dartmouth Port Development Commission, Bedford Waterfront Development Corporation, Alcohol and Gaming Authority Board, and Energy and Mineral Resources Conservation Board.

Commitment

Immediately initiate a review of all government programs with a view to eliminating those that cannot be justified on the basis of necessity, cost, and efficiency. Every single dollar spent by government must benefit Nova Scotians. (p. 19)

Action

- ✔ Announced an internal program analysis on September 20, 1999, to look at all government programs, their costs, their relevance today, and possible alternatives.
- ✔ Announced on October 20, 1999, that Voluntary Planning will conduct an external review of all government programs by establishing an independent fiscal task force to consult all Nova Scotians.
- ✔ Charting the Course, the framework of program analysis, provided government's first detailed inventory of program spending and identified programs should be eliminated, reduced, and enhanced.
- ✔ Passed new financial accountability legislation, spring 2000, which requires the government to establish policy objectives according to the principles of sound fiscal management.
- ✔ Continues to ensure that business planning, program management, and budgeting are fully integrated. As recommended by the Fiscal Management Task Force, Bill 20 will establish the Treasury and Policy Board to more closely coordinate policy priorities and expenditure decisions. As well, as recommended by the Auditor General, Bill 20 will expand the scope and mandate of the Human Resources Commission across the broad public sector.

Commitment

Undertake a review of services that can be more efficiently and cost-effectively provided by the private sector, while ensuring appropriate standards are maintained and our commitment to the NSGEU on private-sector partnering is maintained. (p. 19)

Action

- ✔ Nova Scotia Resources Limited announced in June 2001 that it had completed the sale of assets in the Sable Offshore Energy Project for $355 million plus interest. The deal to sell shares in the company for $65 million plus interest is expected to be completed later this year.
- ✔ Announced changes to the Nova Scotia Liquor Commission in October 2000 that will create private agency stores in under-serviced areas and privately-operated specialty stores. Eight new private-sector agency stores were announced in July 2001.
- ✔ Transferred the Northumberland Golf Course to the club's membership in October 2000, avoiding the need to invest millions in costly capital improvements.
- ✔ Announced its intention on July 27, 2001, to enter into contract negotiations with New Castle Hotels to operate the province's Signature Resorts: Keltic Lodge, Liscombe Lodge, and the Pines Resort.

Commitment

Cut the costs of running government by reducing out-of-province travel and non-essential spending. (p. 18)

Action

- ✔ Approved a new government travel policy in September 2000. Developed the policy to reduce out-of-province travel and use government resources efficiently.

Commitment

Initiate a review of all government buildings, with a view to reducing costs by eliminating surplus office space and conduct a comprehensive energy audit. (p. 19)

Action

- ✔ Completed a report on surplus office space.
- ✔ Started work on a comprehensive energy management plan for government-owned buildings.

Social Fairness, Justice, and Public Safety

Commitment

Remove the grandfather clause imposed on the Property Tax Rebate program that unfairly provides some seniors with municipal property tax relief, while denying it to others. All seniors who apply and meet program guidelines will receive property tax assistance. (p. 24)

Action

✔ Opened the program to all qualifying seniors based on a four-year phase-in.

Commitment

Work towards the elimination of the clawback provision of the National Child Tax Benefit. (p. 23)

Action

✔ Announced a new integrated child tax benefit in October 2000 that basically removes children from the welfare program. The new integrated benefit means the national child tax benefit will no longer be clawed back for those on social assistance.

Commitment

Enhance training allowances and income forgiveness to provide greater incentives for Nova Scotians on Family Benefits to seek employment. (p. 24)

Action

✔ Announced changes in October 2000 that will significantly increase the amount of earned income that assistance recipients can keep. Recipients will now be able to keep 30 per cent of their earnings.

✔ Announced that recipients who are involved in approved training program, including sheltered or supportive employment, are now eligible to keep up to $150 of their allowance, after considering allowable expenses such as transportation and child care.

Commitment

Work with the Disabled Persons' Commission and groups who represent Nova Scotians with disabilities to expand access to accessible transportation services throughout the province. (p. 23)

Action

✔ Allocated $500,000 in grants to support expansion of community-based transportation services in 2001–02 budget.

Commitment

Provide seniors 65 years of age and older who voluntarily participate in safe driving programs with a 50 per cent discount on Registry of Motor Vehicle Fees. (p. 25)

Action

✔ Held public consultations with seniors groups throughout the province to get feedback on the proposal and to determine if this is the most effective way to ensure safe driving practices. Presently examining a new program proposal designed to encourage seniors to participate in safe driving programs.

Commitment

Re-focus resources within the Department of Environment to ensure it meet its primary responsibilities, especially inspection services. (p. 26)

Action

✔ Introduced a comprehensive new law in September 2000 to protect the quality of drinking water. New regulations now require that all public drinking water supplies be tested and the results reported.

✔ Committed $850,000 in the March 2001 budget to implement the clean water strategy.

✔ Released a discussion paper in March 2001 to be used to address deficiencies in sewage management practices.

Commitment

Enact PC legislation introduced in 1998 that provides for forfeiture of "johns'" vehicles in prostitution-related offences. (p. 23)

Action

✔ Legislation currently before the House.

Commitment
Ensure that any future appointments to the Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board are subject to an open, accountable selection process similar to that which governs judicial appointments. (p. 20)

Action
✔ Announced a new, non-partisan process for appointing members to the Utility and Review Board in June 2000, which is similar to the process used in appointing provincial court judges.

Commitment
Restructure the Occupational Health and Safety Division and the Workers' Compensation Board to operate under one board that is equally representative of business and labour. (p. 13)

Action
✔ Held consultations with key stakeholders. Presently awaiting final recommendations.

Commitment
Enact PC legislation introduced during minority government that provides for a sunset clause for the regulations under the Occupational Health and Safety Act to ensure that the regulations in place are necessary. (p. 14)

Action
✔ Passed legislation in fall 2000 that adds a sunset clause to the Occupational Health and Safety Act.

Commitment
Ensure that the review of the Workers' Compensation legislation is carried out and that the recommendations are responded to within three months. (p. 14)

Action
✔ Appointed Workers' Compensation Review Committee spring 2001. Public hearings are scheduled for fall 2001.

Commitment

Proactively target Occupational Health and Safety training and compliance audits at industries and businesses with high accident rates to reduce injuries, leading to lower business costs and WCB premiums.

Action

✔ Testing an information technology extract program to enhance the transfer of information between the Workers' Compensation Board and Occupational Health and Safety.

Commitment

Amend the Consumer Protection Act to require that, on the taking out of a mortgage, or on its renewal, the mortgage company, bank, or trust company provides the borrower with an amortization table. The table must set out clearly the amount of principal and the amount of interest in each and every payment and the amount of principal outstanding at any time, assuming payments have been made on time during the course of the mortgage. (p. 25)

Action

✔ Changed regulations under the Mortgage Brokers and Lenders Act in August 2000 so that mortgage and trust companies must provide amortization tables as part of the information they provide to borrowers who take out or renew a mortgage.

✔ Amended the Consumer Protection Act and the Mortgage Brokers and Lenders Act in November 2000 which introduced the Annual Percentage Rate as a method of calculating and disclosing the cost of borrowing; standardized the timing and content of disclosure statements that lenders must provide borrowers; required that status of loan updates be given to co-signers; required written approval from co-signers before additional credit can be extended to borrowers; required cost of credit disclosure for leases of consumer goods; specifies advertising requirements specific to each type of credit arrangement; and clarifies a consumer's right to pre-pay a non-mortgage loan without penalty.

Commitment

Immediately establish an independent process for setting public prosecutors' salaries and work to implement initiatives that will lead to a more positive work environment as outlined in the Kaufman Report. (p. 22)

Action

✔ Established a working group to develop an independent salary-setting mechanism for Crown attorneys. Mechanism accepted by government and the Nova Scotia Crown Attorneys Association in February 2000.

Commitment
Immediately commit to the development of a secure treatment centre for young Nova Scotians with severe emotional and behavioral problems. (p. 23)

Action
✔ Announced that a new secure treatment centre will be built in Truro. Preliminary site work has begun and construction is expected to begin in September 2001. The facility is scheduled to open in spring 2002.

Commitment
The government will not subsidize the natural gas companies. (p. 20)

Action
✔ Government continues to support the current policy. No direct subsidies exist, nor are any planned.

Commitment
Protect retail gasoline dealers from downloading national advertising costs by major multi-national oil companies. (p. 25)

Action
✔ Protected retail gasoline dealers from downloading of national advertising costs through a regulatory amendment on October 27, 1999.

Commitment
Stop construction of the Correctional Forensic Facility in residential Bedford and find a suitable non-residential site following consultation. (p. 22)

Action
✔ Selected Burnside Industrial Park as the site for the Correctional Forensic Facility following consultation with the affected communities. The facility is now under construction.

Commitment
Government will join the effort by other provinces, including Alberta, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, North West Territories, Yukon, Nunavut, New Brunswick, and Ontario, to legally challenge the federal government's gun control legislation. (p. 21)

Action
✔ Nova Scotia was granted intervener status in a case heard before the Supreme Court of Canada in February 2000.

Commitment

Through local police forces and RCMP across the province, initiate and implement a program to educate seniors on how to effectively deal with situations where they consider their safety at risk. (p. 25)

Action

✔ Launched a new Community Outreach Program. Police are distributing educational videos that offer tips on home safety.

Commitment

Respond to the concerns of many Nova Scotians, particularly seniors, who are growing increasingly concerned about living safely at home, by pursuing stiffer sentences for home invasion as outlined in legislation already introduced. (p. 24)

Action

✔ Justice Minister Michael Baker called on his provincial and federal counterparts at a national meeting of justice ministers in Vancouver, January 2000, to establish a new offence under the Criminal Code for home invasions.

✔ Released guidelines in April 2000 to assist Crown attorneys in preparing to prosecute home invasion cases.

✔ Established a new community outreach program that uses an instructional video to remind seniors, youth, and women how to live safely at home.

Commitment

In keeping with our belief that "justice delayed is justice denied," look for efficiencies to help streamline our justice system. (p. 22)

Action

✔ Tabled Bill 25, the Justice Administration Act, in November 1999 to improve the administration of justice by making necessary modifications to a variety of existing legislation. The bill received Royal Assent on November 23, 1999.

✔ Introduced changes to the Juries Act in June 2000 to streamline and improve the process of jury selection.

✔ Announced in July 2000 the implementation of a new system to control the purchase of legal services from the private sector. It will ensure a coordinated approach to the procurement of legal services and will feature a tracking system to ensure that government is getting the best value for taxpayers' dollars.

✔ Introduced an Omnibus Bill in November 2000 to modernize several acts including the Family Court Act, the Provincial Court Act, the Justices of the Peace Act, and the Summary Proceedings Act.

- ✔ Introduced in April 2001 the Enforcement of Canadian Judgements and Decrees Act and the Liens Act as part of a national strategy to harmonize and streamline commercial law.
- ✔ Introduced in April 2001 the Justice Administration Amendment (2001) Act following extensive consultation with the legal community.
- ✔ Announced in May 2001 that a Summary Offence Court would be established in Cape Breton to hear all summary offence matters. This will divert almost 2,700 cases from the provincial court docket each year, giving more time for the provincial court to hear more serious crimes.

Commitment

Ensure that front-line Community Service workers are fully briefed on all relevant changes to government policies and procedures and encourage their full participation in identifying ways to improve efficiencies and response times in dealing with clients. (p. 23)

Action

- ✔ Converted Family Benefits cases to IA Computer System, which resulted in extensive cross training of all field staff in both Family Benefits and Social Assistance Programs.
- ✔ Elicited staff input at all levels of the Social Assistance restructuring through focus groups and issues-related working groups. Over 400 staff were involved in different aspects of the last phase of redesigning the new legislation that led to welfare reform.
- ✔ Made the Department of Community Services' policy and procedure manuals available on-line, August 2001, allowing for instant access to the new social assistance system.

Commitment

Instruct the Department of Community Services to work with the Nova Scotia Community College System and School Boards to coordinate meaningful skills training for single parents. (p. 24)

Action

- ✔ Sponsored approximately 130 single parents to attend a full range of Nova Scotia Community College programs during the 2000–01 school year.

Commitment
Ensure that government services are user friendly and readily available to seniors. (p. 25)

Action
- ✔ Redesigned the Programs for Seniors Directory in 2001, making it easier to read and more complete.
- ✔ A research project called Seniors and Literacy is now underway to determine what seniors see as barriers to literacy and what they would recommend as effective solutions.

Commitment
Ensure the Senior Citizens' Secretariat is given the necessary resources to carry out its mandate, with a commitment to meet regularly with representative seniors' groups to ensure the concerns of seniors are addressed. (p. 24)

Action
- ✔ Increased the 2000–01 budget of the Senior Citizen's Secretariat to $540,200.

Commitment
Support the continuation of Community Action Programs for Children. (p. 23)

Action
- ✔ The Department of Community Services supports this program through partnerships and has funding available to continue its support.

Commitment
Ensure that day care subsidies are portable and are attached to the child, not the facility. (p. 23)

Action
- ✔ Announced funding for 150 subsidized portable seats since assuming office.

Commitment

Introduce legislation to permit municipalities to tax non-residential property owners at a higher rate than residential landowners. (p. 21)

Action

- ✔ Amended the Municipal Government Act to enable municipalities to pass a by-law to establish different rates of property tax for land owned by non-residents. The amendments have been put on hold to allow for a detailed analysis of the extent of non-resident land ownership and complete a public consultation process. Voluntary Planning is leading this initiative and will issue a report in the fall 2001.
- ✔ The new Land Registration Act (2001) now requires non-residents to disclose their place of residence when they register property. This will aid in tracking the amount of land being purchased by non-residents across the province.

Commitment

In cooperation with the Trucking Association of Nova Scotia and the Atlantic Provinces' Truckers Association, work to enhance highway safety and education. (p. 26)

Action

- ✔ Approved new regulations in December 1999 to direct funds paid to the Workers Compensation Board Accident Fund into programs that support safety training initiatives carried out by Nova Scotia's trucking industry.
- ✔ Announced Stolen and Wrecked Vehicle Program in June 2000 to prevent badly damaged vehicles from returning to the roads.
- ✔ Introduced legislation in April 2001 to amend the Public Highways Act. Amendments will improve sign directions and protect controlled access highways from excessive advertising. Also, amendments to the Motor Vehicle Act allow for stiffer penalties both for failing to yield to pedestrians in crosswalks and for passing a stopped school bus with flashing lights.
- ✔ Announced standards in April 2001 to improve safety during highway construction. For example, workers must review planning checklists before starting work.
- ✔ Announced in May 2001 that school zone signs would change colour to better protect students in school zones.